

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 069281 TOSEC 030077
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DRAFTED BY: S/S-O LRMACFARLANE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 069281 TOSEC 030077

FOR HABIB FROM MOOSE

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM KINSHASA DTD 29 MAR 1977 QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2844

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS CG

SUBJECT: SHABA INVASION: IMPACT OF USG PUBLIC STATEMENTS

1. WISH TO INFORM YOU OF A PROBLEM THAT IS DEVELOPING HERE WHICH, IF NOT HANDLED CAREFULLY, COULD SERIOUSLY EXACERBATE THE ALREADY DELICATE NATURE OF OUR BILATERALL RELATIONS AS THE SHABA PROBLEM DEEPENS.

2. AFTER UNSUCCESSFULLY TRYING TO CALL ME DIRECTLY THIS MORNING, MOBUTU HAD NGUZA SUMMON ME URGENTLY TO EXPRESS HIS GRAVE CONCERN REGARDING STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT ABOUT THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SHABA. WHAT HAS PARTICULARLY AROUSED MOBUTU'S WRATH (NGUZA SAID HE HAD NEVER BEFORE HEARD THE PRESIDENT SO UPSET) WERE REPORTS THIS MORNING
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CARRIED BY SEVERAL FOREIGN RADIO NETWORKS, INCLUDING VOA, REPORTING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD CONFIRMED THE FALL OF MUTSHATSHA. MOREOVER, VOA HAD CONTRASTED THIS TO THE GOZ'S OFFICIAL DENIAL ON THE SAME DAY THAT MUTSHATSHA WAS IN ENEMY HANDS. MOBUTU COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE USG FELT OBLIGED TO BE THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION WHICH VITALLY AFFECTS HIS ABILITY TO DEFEND ZAIRE AGAINST ATTACK. IT WAS ONE THING

FOR OUR JOURNALISTS HERE TO REPORT SUCH EVENTS, BUT QUITE ANOTHER FOR THE USG TO BE DENYING OR CONFIRMING DEVELOPMENTS IN A WAR WHICH THE US ITSELF KEEPS SAYING IS PRIMARILY AN AFRICAN PROBLEM. IF WE CANNOT SAY ANYTHING HELPFUL, NGUZA URGED, PLEASE DON'T SAY ANYTHING AT ALL.

3. I THINK MOBUTU'S POINT IN THIS CASE IS WELL TAKEN. I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED HIS GROWING UNHAPPINESS WITH US STATEMENTS WHICH HE REGARDS AS SIGNALS TO HIS ENEMIES THAT THE US DOES NOT INTEND TO HELP ZAIRE. THESE, OF COURSE, ARE STATEMENTS OF POLICY WHICH--ALTHOUGH THEY MAKE MY LIFE MORE DIFFICULT HERE IN DEALING WITH MOBUTU--HAVE BEEN BOTH NECESSARY AND USEFUL IN MAKING OUR POSITION CLEAR TO ALL PARTIES. BUT I WOULD HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL HENCEFORTH REFRAIN FROM PRONOUNCING ON MILITARY MATTERS. IT WOULDN'T TAKE MUCH FOR FAZ TO BREAK AND RUN AT KOLWEZI, AND AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS FROM WASHINGTON--BROADCAST INTO THIS AREA AND IN THIS CASE CONTRADICTING THE GOZ'S LINE WITH ITS OWN TROOPS AND POPULACE--COULD HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT ON EVENTS.

4. I ANTICIPATE ANOTHER PROBLEM ARISING FROM TODAY'S SCHEDULED EVACUATION OF THE REMAINING AMERICANS FROM KOLWEZI. WHILE WE OBVIOUSLY SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM SUCH A DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING US CITIZENS, I WOULD HOPE WE COULD DO SO IN A LOW-KEY WAY. BOTH THE ZAIRIANS AND THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR HERE ARE VERY WORRIED THAT THE AMERICAN EXODUS FROM KOLWEZI MAY TRIGGER THE FLIGHT OF THE BELGIANS RUNNING THE MINES AND FOR THAT MATTER, OF THE FAZ DEFENDERS. FOR THIS REASON, WHATEVER THE USG DOES AND SAYS, BOTH HERE AND IN WASHINGTON, SHOULD BE VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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CAREFULLY HANDLED.

5. NOTE: AFTER DRAFTING THE ABOVE, I TALKED DIRECTLY WITH MOBUTU AND ASSURED HIM WE WOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO AVOID UNHELPLESS STATEMENTS. NGUZA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN WAS NO EXAGGERATION.
CUTLER UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 29-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SOPN, MOPS, CG, US
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